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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 MANILA 002660

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EAP/PMBS; G; G/TIP - NORIN, ETERNO; EAP/RSP - SU;  
INL; DRL/IL; DRL/CRA; STAS - ATKINSON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [ELAB](#) [KOCI](#) [TINT](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: TIP: GRP BEGINNING TO FOCUS ON CYBERSEX DANGERS

REF: A. MANILA 2200

[B](#). MANILA 971

[C](#). MANILA 702

[D](#). MANILA 607

[1](#)1. (U) This cable is Sensitive but Unclassified -- Please handle accordingly.

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higher pay, convenience and relative safety. Prostitutes, for example, have noted to NGO workers the impossibility of contracting sexually transmitted diseases in cybersex "encounters" and, due to time zone differences, the daytime work schedules are attractive. Nonetheless, there is evidence that performers who are above the age of consent are lured into the trade and then coerced to stay in the dens.

16. (U) Some customers often prefer to exploit minors. Many parents have little understanding of the technology and are therefore less able to detect the abuse. Other parents are complicit with operators and maintain that the absence of physical contact belies any purported harm to the child. There are no estimates of the numbers of child victims.

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Current State of GRP Law  
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17. (U) Philippine law does not yet specifically address TIP-related cybersex and we are not aware of any convictions of den operators. Contacts have told us that prosecutors can use the following existing statutes against alleged operators of cybersex dens if certain circumstances are met:

-- Article 201 of the Revised Penal Code prescribes fines of up to 12,000 pesos (USD 223) and six to 12 years imprisonment for "exhibition of indecent shows." This law penalizes victims and pornographers, but has no provision for customers.

-- Republic Act (R.A.) 7610, the Child Abuse law, provides up to 12 years imprisonment for those who "hire, employ, use, persuade, induce or coerce a child to perform in obscene exhibitions and indecent shows, whether they are live or on video."

-- R.A. 8042, the Anti-Illegal Recruitment law, provides fines of 1 million pesos (USD 18,519) and life imprisonment for the illegal recruitment of minors.

pace with the problem. Operators can readily adopt the latest hardware and now even use encryption. At the same time, austere budgets, lack of training, and corruption constrain the police. There are indications, for example, but no hard evidence, that local government officials in some regions may be protecting dens and profiting from them. Efren Meneses, Head of the Anti-Fraud and Computer Crimes Division of the National Bureau of Investigation, laments his office's lack of both computers and cooperation from Internet service providers. Few lawyers and police officers are familiar with procedures for electronic evidence. Some local governments have taken the initiative to fight the problem. For example, the government in Isabela Province located northeast of Manila has formed an interagency group to address cybersex issues.

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Comment  
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11. (SBU) All of our contacts agree that cybersex is widespread and growing. Officials realize that cybersex den operators currently have the upper hand and that cybersex is a contributing factor in TIP. As the GRP tries to deal with the problem, the most critical areas where improvement is needed include: enhanced training for police, prosecutors and judges; a specific law that prosecutors can apply to TIP-related scenarios; collection of statistics so the scope of the problem can be assessed and progress against it examined via metrics; and increased assistance to victims. The GRP and NGOs already operate anti-TIP programs and would welcome assistance to fight cybersex. Philippine NGOs are willing and, given the necessary funding, would be able to assist the GRP in this area (Ref A). Mission will continue to monitor this growing phenomenon and will work with NGOs to develop targeted proposals focused on fighting TIP-related cybersex. Mission is also providing Filipinos information on the U.S. PROTECT Act of 2003, which strengthens U.S. law enforcement's ability to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish violent crimes committed against children, including those that involve U.S. citizens and have an international nexus.  
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